



## **Homeland Security Grant Awarded to City of Meridian *\$100,000 to be used for readiness training***

**Meridian, Miss. (May 09, 2012)** – A \$100,000 grant has been awarded to the City of Meridian Public Safety Training Facility for law enforcement and search and rescue training. The grant was presented by the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security, on behalf of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

The grant is part of a \$200 million federal program being administered by the United States Department of Homeland Security. The program is intended to improve emergency management and preparedness capabilities at the state, local, and community levels as part of a comprehensive national emergency management system. Meridian Public Safety Training Facility trains both local law enforcement officers and officers from other southern states. Some of the classes included passenger rail rescue, civilian classes in basic handguns, and firearms training.

“Effective homeland security involves not only having the right equipment in place, but also ensuring that we have highly trained personnel available to respond,” said J.W. Ledbetter, Director of the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security. “These funds will provide our first responders with advanced knowledge should a situation arise.”

Ledbetter said the United States Department of Homeland Security has directed state Homeland Security affiliates to use the funding to enhance existing capabilities within individual states for responding to acts of domestic and international terrorism, use of weapons of mass destruction and biochemical agents.

The grant program is part of a federal plan for ‘All-Hazard’ response planning, beginning at local levels. The aim is to improve response capabilities for catastrophic natural disasters, potential for weapons of mass destruction, acts of terrorism, and chemical/biological/radiological/nuclear/explosive incidents. The initiative also improves local response capabilities for traffic agents, fires and other emergencies.

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The Mississippi Office of Homeland Security, a division of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, in fiscal year 2011 will distribute more than \$5.29 million in Homeland Security Grant Program funding in Mississippi for training and equipment.

For more information go to [www.homelandsecurity.ms.gov](http://www.homelandsecurity.ms.gov).

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